

THE NOE VALLEY VOICE



Photo by Charles Kennard

Azziz Saddi of Angel's Market is one of Noe Valley's small store owners who caters to customers' cravings for friendliness and specialty items.

Little Stores Are Where It's-It's At

By Jeff Kahiss

Those of you who've been seized by a late evening craving for an It's It, a TV Guide, or a can of Kitty Queen, know it's the little stores shining on the corners that keep Noe Valley alive. More than a convenient alternative to Bell or Safeway, these establishments are shrines of personal service, a scarce commodity in this paranoid, competitive world.

That's why Sami Mogannam, dapper owner of the St. Francis Grocery at Sanchez and 29th Streets, learns all his customers' first names, even the scores of kids from nearby St. Paul's School who clamor for the dollar "Kids' Sandwiches" from Sami's deli. He also makes a point of catering to customers' special tastes. He claims to be the first in the neighborhood to have provided Häagen-Dazs ice cream to homesick New Yorkers.

Sami's five-year tenure at the St. Francis is about average for Noe Valley small store owners, but some, like Vijay and Saras Chand, a couple blocks away at Sanchez and 30th, are just discovering the "peacefulness" of the neighborhood.

A few months ago, the Chands took over Connie's Market, which had shut down after being rammed by a runaway automobile. They moved into the rear apartment, expanded the store's hours, reduced the prices, and capitalized on their warin, Fiji-grown personalities to retain and expand the store's clientele.

The Chands look forward to joining a grocer's association to get discounts on some items. Sami, who is of Palestinian origin, belongs to the Arah Grocers Association, which provides him with legal

advice and lobbying at City Hall.

Another of the some 465 members of this association is Michael Dabaie, another Palestinian who runs the J&N Grocery perched on top of the hill at 22nd and Castro. Mike reports that the organization is pushing rent control for the small stores, which often experience sharp increases every time their lease expires. These hikes, plus rising overhead (for example, a recent \$80 per month hike in electricity) and increases in the minimum order suppliers will accept, have seriously inflated the cost of owning a corner grocery.

Mike hopes his customers will understand when some of this burden is passed on to them. "We have life to live," he says, "cars, houses, children...the public should help us, not complain."

Crime, however, is not a complaint of Mike's, though he personally knew the storeowner who was murdered last month in the Mission (at 22nd and York).

He's occasionally suspicious of "passersby," but never of the "locals." Sometimes he dreams of returning to his previous work as a chef and opening a restaurant on 24th Street that would specialize in Italian and Middle Eastern dishes.

Down the hill, Azziz Saddi has no plans to abandon Angel's Market at the corner of Castro and 26th. He bought it nine years ago for \$2,200 and is now taking in about \$37,000 a month.

Azziz has the advantage of a "dead end" location, serving both private homes and large apartment buildings on

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What Lies Ahead for the Old Wave

By Joan Borns

Whatever happened to beauty shops, or as some women grew up calling them, beauty parlors—those utilitarian no-frills establishments with the latest Clairol and L'Oréal promotion glossies displayed in the windows?

In the last 15 years, fashion and technology have turned these all-purpose beauty emporiums into near anachronisms. The standard practices of a generation ago—roller sets, hairspraying and teasing—have become passé in an era where an increasing number of women have little time to spend on intricate styling. Hairdryers, those martian-like hubble-hooded contraptions, sit forlornly unoccupied, while their successors, the blowdryer and the infrared lamp, remain in constant use. With today's freer, more natural-looking hairstyles, the cutting process now gets top billing. These days your beauty operator is usually called a "stylist" or "hair designer" to indicate he or she is a specialized professional.

However, despite the recent influx of trendy hairdressers, a number of old-style beauty shops still exist in Noe Valley. Although the shops do sport a blowdryer or two, their customers are more often than not parked under old-fashioned hairdryers. Rollers, spraying and teasing are *de rigueur*, and the decor is spartan and purely functional. What

distinguishes these shops are the incredibly low prices and a feeling of camaraderie that has developed over many years.

"I'm just a plain old beauty operator," says Claire Bassett, proprietress of Claire's Beauty Shop. Like most of the old-timers, she would agree that if it's high style you're after, you'd better look elsewhere.

Three of the oldest beauty shops in Noe Valley can be found right in the heart of the 24th Street commercial strip: Elisa's, The Dollhouse and Claire's. With life imitating a soap opera, the proprietresses of these shops are all interrelated in some way. Elisa Ining bought out the building where Claire Bassett had her first shop before she moved to her current location further down the street. Bassett got the courage to go into business for herself from Helen Dodd, owner of the Dollhouse,

who subsequently retired and passed it on to one of her operators, "young Helen," (Helen Pinedas, who now runs it)...and so it goes.

Elisa Ining and Claire Bassett are the senior members of this trio, having started their parlors over 20 years ago. Before she came to Noe Valley, Ining had a shop on Mission between 23rd and 24th Streets. Prior to that, she cut hair at the Emporium when haircuts were priced at \$2.50—which gives some indication of how long she's been around. When I remarked that I didn't see any grey in her hair, she replied serenely, "That's our business."

Ining's tiny shop is now housed in an annex behind the building she owns at 4026 24th St. At one time she employed two permanent and one part-time operator, but today she runs a solo operation. "I've had a hard time with operators," she says. "They are so temperamental, and I got sick and tired of training them, working them up and introducing them to customers. So I decided I would just work by myself."

As with every other industry, inflation threatens to ruin the small-time beauty operator. "Beauty shop work is hard," says Ining. "People don't realize that we don't make money. Take the cost of a permanent, for instance. My base price is \$30, and a permanent involves at least



Photo by Irene Kane

Sitting under the dryer provides a good opportunity for catching up on the latest tabloid.

three hours of labor. Ten dollars an hour doesn't begin to cover the cost of electricity, towels, shampoo or insurance."

She noted that a place like Supercuts was dependent upon high volume in order to offer a low price. According to Ining, with rents for 24th Street storefronts averaging about \$1,000 to \$1,200 a month, each operator would need to turn out 20 haircuts a day to realize a profit.

Ining feels that owning her building is

Continued on Page 5

DEADLINES

The next issue of the *Noe Valley Voice* will appear on Feb. 2, 1982. Our advertising deadline is Jan. 21, 1982, and all editorial and calendar items must be received before Jan. 18.

Please address all inquiries to *Voice*, 1021 Sanchez St., S.F., 94114.

Editorial

Thanks and No Thanks

If you haven't been robbed, arrested for drunk-driving, or forced to spend a holiday flight layover in San Jose, you might yet find a reason to be thankful this 1981-82 Christmas season. After all, the hostages are home and you're still alive. And you can "reach out and touch someone" even from jail, right?

Don't count on it.

Since this is being written after one of those cranky 18-hour pre-Thanksgiving work days, the editorial "we" sends a special "no thanks" to Pacific Telephone Company for seeing to it that our editorial phone has been out of order four times in the last five months. Three shutdowns were on deadline days, giving some of our more elusive reporters grace time they didn't deserve. And though we've been sending checks to Ma quite often, she's refused to credit two of them, and there's been no second notice. Ma just stops the dial tone once in a while. (We recommend you write to us instead of call.)

Wait, this is supposed to be our Christmas card of thanks, not a diatribe against one of the more brutish monoliths ever to sponsor "Masterpiece Theater."

And, speaking of hankrolling, the *Voice* has every reason to thank the sponsors of *this* show: our Noe Valley advertisers. Aside from enabling us to afford occasional phone service, our local merchants have acknowledged our efforts at a special kind of publication: a hometown newspaper within a larger city. These small-business owners—Tom Frenkel of Finnegan's Wake, Boh and Denny Giovannoli of Tuggey's Hardware, Glen Potter of Accent on Flowers, "The Gang" at Cathexis, and Tom Crane of Colerene, to name a few of our oldest advertisers—have given us their bottom-line support whether they've agreed with all of what we printed or not. We're grateful to them and to all those "too numerous to mention."

So before you brave that festive mob downtown or venture out into mall-land, try shopping and celebrating in Noe Valley. And let your feet do the walking. ■

Rent Control for Small Businesses

What does the owner of a Ma and Pa grocery store in the Richmond do when her rent is suddenly increased from \$400 a month to \$1,200? What does a barber in Chinatown do when his store rent is tripled? What happens when boutiques start moving into a neighborhood and pushing up rents to a higher level than long-established businesses like hardware stores can afford?

What usually happens is that the neighborhood store is forced to move or close down altogether. For those of us who shop in these stores, the loss of neighborhood-serving businesses means fewer places to walk to get a quart of milk or pack of cigarettes at 10 o'clock at night or fewer places in our neighborhood to wash our clothes or get a key made or do any of the dozens of things San Franciscans do on their local shopping street. For seniors, the closure of neighborhood businesses means going further from home to shop. For all of us, it threatens the relatively friendly, easy-going human scale of shopping in San Francisco.

Is this talk of a threat to neighborhood businesses alarmist? Are such circumstances unusual? Not really. From Clement Street to 24th Street, many neighborhood businesses have been hit hard by rent increases that often approach astronomical levels. Rapidly rising real estate values, speculation, displacement by non-neighborhood-serving downtown businesses, an increase in tourist orientation, and other factors all contribute to the problem.

Ma and Pa stores face a particularly

Community Crosstalk

EDITOR'S NOTE: Community Crosstalk is an open forum for Voice readers. Submissions of up to 750 words must be mailed by the 15th of the month preceding the month of issue. The Voice reserves the right to edit material received. Our address is 1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114.

desperate situation. Forced to compete with larger chain stores whose economies of scale often permit lower prices, the corner grocery store survives on a thin profit margin and on its special characteristics—later hours, convenience of location and often a friendly neighborhood atmosphere. Such stores simply cannot afford to compete in a volatile, highly competitive and very expensive commercial real estate market.

The issue really comes down to this: should the city leave the commercial real estate market alone and risk having its neighborhood business streets become like Union Street, or is it in the public interest to protect neighborhood stores, to insure that San Francisco will remain a city of distinct neighborhood and corner stores on a human scale? To those of us who love San Francisco because of the special character of its neighborhoods, because it is not a collection of Zayres, McDonalds and 7-11s, the answer is clearly yes.

At the request of small business groups, I have introduced legislation which would extend the city's rent control law to cover small businesses. Although the details of the legislation are still being worked out, its effect would

be to limit rent increases for neighborhood (i.e., outside of downtown) small businesses to something near the rate of inflation and to give small businesses some protection from unjust evictions.

The Board of Supervisors Planning, Housing and Development Committee has held two hearings on this issue. At a hearing on Oct. 20, petitions hearing 10,000 signatures were turned in to the board by representatives of Ma and Pa store owners. Representatives of more than 500 of the city's neighborhood grocers urged passage of the bill, as did representatives of many Chinese and Black small businesspeople.

The legislation is expected to be before the full board by early December and could go into effect on Jan. 1, 1982. If it passes (and expression of community support to the board is important), this small business rent control legislation will, with a minimum of bureaucracy, represent a long step toward making sure that the city we now have—a city of culturally rich and varied neighborhoods and of friendly, familiar and convenient corner stores—will still be around for us and for others to enjoy.

Harry Britt
Member, S.F. Board of Supervisors

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Letters

EDITOR:

That's some November issue! I've read only a third of it so far, and it's all been excellent. The piece on Community Boards was especially good—a real service.

Thanks,
your fan

Subscribers, Note

Here comes the crucial test: It's renewal time for a lot of you, and when you get that notice, you're going to reach for the checkbook and pen us another \$10 for another 10 issues, right?

Well, you have some complaints?

So we didn't break the Richard Allen story. So we spelled Tom Frenkel's name wrong a few times. Maybe we shouldn't have chickened out on the ---- story just because ----- called the -----.

And we put out the warning on the Giant Raccoons too late to save little Samantha, and we failed to win a Pulitzer again.

Look, nobody's perfect. How about a loan until next Tuesday? ■

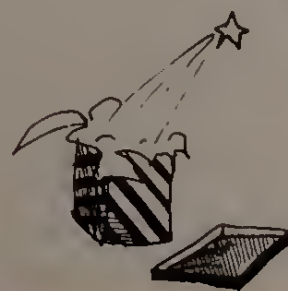
A Spooky Success

Noe Valley residents and merchants created a 1981 neighborhood Halloween party that was a huge success. About 200 children in costume and many parents squeezed into the Noe Valley Ministry to enjoy prizes, treats, a unique Haunted House created and staffed by children, and Halloween cartoons by the Noe Valley Cinema.

The 18-piece Gene Gilleaux Swing Band made it impossible for dancers and music lovers to sit still. Costume judges Roth Asawa and Miriam Blaustein had difficulty selecting winners, finally settling on Lou and Pam Hopfer (dressed as a Viking couple) as their first choice. Countless individuals, businesses and groups contributed to this special party program.

Widespread appreciation for this neighborhood party led to immediate discussion of plans for next year's party, and anyone interested in helping is invited to call 285-2648. This may be the beginning of a neighborhood tradition that brings together all segments of our community. Pictures of the party should appear soon in the window of Books Plus.

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Bank May Fill Long-Empty Storefront

By Steve Steinberg

Noe Valley may have a new bank in the near future, and a long vacant storefront may finally find an occupant.

According to Max Selva of Selva Realty, negotiations are now under way to install a bank branch in the empty shop at 3995 24th St.

Selva said he had been asked by bank officials to keep their name confidential.

Asked when the bank might move in, Selva replied, "Soon, I hope." He also said he had a couple of other clients in mind in case the current negotiations didn't work out. Selva is representing Dr. Michael McFadden, owner of the property, in the talks with the bank.

The shop, located at the corner of 24th and Noe Streets, has been vacant since October, 1980, when *Star Magic*, the previous occupant, moved out and relocated across the street.

The storefront had been the focus of a long-running legal battle between McFadden and the Friends of Noe Valley. McFadden had planned to open a liquor store on the property and applied

Photo by Irene Kane



The future of this storefront at 24th and Noe has not been clear since *Star Magic* moved out a year ago, though the windows have been. It now looks like a bank may move into the space, which has been occupied of late only by this bottle of Windex.

for a liquor license in 1977. The community organization challenged the license on the grounds that 24th Street was already saturated with liquor stores.

In 1979, after a lengthy appeals process, McFadden finally succeeded in gaining permission to open a liquor store, but his plans fell through when a partner dropped out of the venture. He next hoped to open an art gallery on the site, but couldn't find anyone interested in starting one.

McFadden, who is an attorney as well as a physician and has a medical practice on 24th Street, owns several other pieces of property on Noe Valley's main street. The Irish-horn doctor lives above his office and has 10 children.

McFadden said he was not looking forward to a bank moving into the 24th and Noe shop, but would not interfere with the negotiations. He has renovated the storefront extensively since *Star Magic* moved out.

Mini-Park Planned

On Saturday, Nov. 21, a tinted-window luxury tour coach rolled up to the corner of Army and Noe Streets, where a band of Friends of Noe Valley members waited to greet the Open Space Committee from the city Recreation and Parks Department.

Friends had proposed that the weedy hillside, technically part of Army Street, be transformed into an urban mini-park, with landscaping and a flight of stairs to allow access to the bus route on Noe Street.

According to Friends President Miriam Blaustein, the Open Space Committee members responded favorably to the group's plan, but warned of possible financial and political hurdles. The Department of Public Works, which has jurisdiction over the site, must transfer the property to the Recreation and Parks Department before renovation can begin.

Bill Kuhns, chairman of the Friends' Rec. and Park Committee, welcomes assistance on this neighborhood project. He can be reached at 826-2304.



Photo by Charles Kennard

Demian, Sebastian, Gabriel, and two Joes clamor among the garbage and grass on the mini-cliff that rises above their homes at the top of Army Street. Friends of Noe Valley is working to convert this property to a safe and scenic mini-park.

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'Special Use' Gets One-Year Extension

By Steve Steinberg

Twenty-fourth Street will remain a "special use" district for at least another year while the city Planning Department figures out a new code for neighborhood commercial areas.

The special use ordinance, first passed in 1980, regulates the character of businesses in 10 areas of the city. On 24th Street, the ordinance limits the number of new bars, restaurants, liquor stores and banks in an effort to avoid over-commercialization of the street.

The Board of Supervisors approved a one-year extension of the special use controls in October. The extension will allow the Planning Department the necessary time to revise sections of the planning code that govern neighborhood commercial districts.

According to city planner Rohin Jones, special use was never intended as a permanent solution to neighborhood commercial zoning problems. Rather, the legislation was formulated as a stop-gap measure, designed to replace outdated or inadequate provisions of the code without officially amending it.

Now, Jones said, "the whole damn code" will be revised. The revamped code, like special use, will refer to specific streets and neighborhoods, such as 24th Street and the Castro.

Jones also said that special use had been an experiment, implemented to test certain zoning concepts. She praised the ordinance's innovative features, particularly its ability to focus on localized concerns.

A preliminary draft of the new sections of the planning code will be presented for citizen review in January, 1982. Additional drafts and an environmental impact report will be completed by next summer, with public hearings in July. Jones expects that a finished code will be ready for approval by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors next October.

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Little Stores

Continued from Page 1

the slopes above his shop. His clientele, 90 percent gay by his reckoning, likes "premium wines and good stuff." A man who truly enjoys his money, Aziz is a member of the Independent Grocers Association and keeps track of his horses on the store's stereo system.

Rick McCullough, serving the north face of the same hill from the corner of 29th and Castro, also sees the lifestyle of the neighborhood as "continuously upgraded," mainly due to the higher pricetags on local private dwellings.

Rick took over the 52-year-old M&M Market, moved in upstairs, cleaned up and painted the property, and now boasts what may be the neatest store west of New England. Each can is dusted and perfectly aligned with its neighbor, and American Historical wallpaper has re-



Tim O'Neel, newly established at 25th and Sanchez, already has plans to expand his stock and clientele.

placed the outdated beer panoramas which abound elsewhere.

Rick serves a daily lunch special, Unknown Jerome Cookies, and several varieties of fresh coffee. He used to be a "sales rep," visiting stores in the Noe and Castro areas, so he knows to avoid the common mistake of understocking.

His neighbor at the foot of the hill (Lam's Grocery, 29th and Noe) does not share Rick's sunny view of social change. Farid Katami, who has lived and worked at his location for 10 years—longer than anyone else we interviewed—still enjoys a friendly interchange with his regulars (who call him "Fred"), but he liked things better when there were a greater number of stable families. Now, he says, people "crook" each other and write him rubber checks. He's been trying to sell his store for several years, without success.

Tim O'Neel recently opened the store named after him at 25th and Sanchez, and so is at the opposite end of the business cycle. He brought the building up to

code—it used to be a crafts shop—and intends to file for a liquor license as soon as one becomes available.

A minority in an occupation filled with persons of Near and Middle Eastern origin, Tim claims some people have told him "it's nice to see an Irish name"; at first he was reluctant to use it. He is building his reputation through reasonable prices, courteous service and long hours (nine to nine).

Sal Hassanein, also new to groceries (he was an accountant who "wanted to work for my own self") is keeping even longer hours to establish a place on the competitive strip along Church Street. Sal and his wife and brother-in-law go from seven in the morning to midnight

every day of the week, thereby making the Modern Market at Church and 26th the earliest opening and latest closing of the stores we surveyed.

Such long hours can be "like a prison," says Sami at the St. Francis. He'd like "to be free like the bird," but long hours are one reason the small stores survive. Another is specialty items, like Sami's Häagen-Dazs, Rick's coffee, or the yummy chocolate-chip walnut cookies baked by Fatma Ahmed of Ronnie's Market (Army and Sanchez).

More than anything, though, it's the friendliness and good will that come across the counter from these merchants, who truly care for their customers.

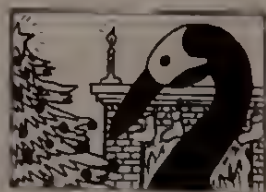


It's not as peaceful as the island he left, but Vijay Chand's sunny disposition is a strong selling point on upper Sanchez Street.



Fatma Ahmed was fresh from Egypt when she took over Ronnie's Grocery at Sanchez and Army. In her four years here she's learned English and helped put her daughters through college.

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Old Wave

Continued from Page 1

what enables her to stay in business and gives her the freedom to offer such services as "precision" hair-cutting. Precision cutting probably more than any other factor is what revolutionized the trade and left the old-time beauty shop behind. "A precision cut is very time-consuming," explains Ining. "It's not like any cut where you just cut straight across, but involves establishing a guideline with the first layer of hair. You must keep recombining and rechecking to make sure the hair is following the guideline."

"If I did (offer precision cuts), I would lose business," says Helen Pineda of the Dollhouse. She describes her customers as "gals who wouldn't dream of going out with pink and purple hair," a diplomatic reference to the Noe Valley natives who've been coming to the Dollhouse since they were in high school.

"I've known Helen ever since she was a little girl," says regular customer Pat Jahn. "Last week she gave my grandson his first haircut."

The Dollhouse has been called that ever since it was on Castro Street up the hill from the Bank of America. No one knows how it got its name. It has been at its current location at 4008 24th St. for 18 years.

Pineda started working there when its now retired owners, Lillian Dodd and Helen Stuckey, were operating the shop. Stuckey still owns the building, and according to Pineda, the rent is "very, very fair." That and a steady clientele enable her to offer extremely reasonable prices. "We also have a lending library," smiles Pineda, pointing to the box of magazines Jahn had just brought in.

On the Saturday I visited the Dollhouse, shampoos and sets were proceeding at a brisk pace, and a permanent was in progress. Amelia Verdier, one of the shop's regular customers, was sitting under the dryer, happily reading the *National Enquirer*. Another regular, Mary, was about to emerge from the dryer for a comb-out. "I usually go to sleep under the dryer and let them wake me up," she said. "We have several customers who are like that," says Pineda. "I think when you go to a beauty salon that's the way it should be—that's your time."

Because the old-time beauty shops are not well-versed in the latest techniques, they depend on an older, established clientele to keep them going. However, escalating rents and the advancing age of the clients and the operators themselves have made these beauty shops endangered species.

Terry Niccolls, for example, who operated the popular Witches Hut Beauty Salon on Church Street, was recently forced out of business by a staggering rent increase. Josephine of Josephine Beauty Salon, "a fabulous little operator," according to Claire Bassett, had to close her shop due to ill health.

Bassett, who's been "doing pincurts ever since I was old enough to wrap them around my finger," has not been well herself recently and in fact had to temporarily close her shop last year. It was empty when I saw her on a late Saturday



Photo by Irene Kane

Some Noe Valley women still enjoy their weekly shampoo and set at an old-fashioned beauty parlor. But higher rents and new-fangled "stylists" are threatening these stores' existence.

afternoon. She explained that one of her best customers, a woman who had been coming to see her every two weeks for 25 years, had cancelled her appointment because she'd had a fall, resulting in a severe head injury. "Pretty soon I won't have a head to work on," Bassett lamented.

Bassett graduated from high school in 1936 and worked in Santa Rosa before coming to San Francisco "just before V-J Day. I came up on a Friday night after work and by Monday had a job in a beauty shop," she recalls. "And I didn't even know what a cold wave was."

When she moved on to work at the A-Waverite (now Den Christopher's), Bassett saw the opportunity to buy a beauty business across the street. The equipment was "ancient," according to Bassett, who remembers the days of

"machine permanents," but with a purchase price of \$125, it was a steal.

"I remember asking Helen Stuckey, who was running the Dollhouse then, if she would buy it and I would run it for her. I didn't think I had the capability. Helen told me, 'You buy it and I'll teach you how to run it.'" Bassett stayed there until Elisa Ining bought the building and then moved into her present storefront at 3868 24th St. in February, 1958.

"I hated it every day for about two years," she recalls. "When I first moved in, it was just a hole in the wall with dirt floors. And there was nobody else down here, really, on this part of the street back then. Then, around 1960 or so, people started moving in down here so it was less lonely."

"One of the first things I learned was to never overbuy or overstock," she confided. "It's all show now with young

people who open up salons these days; before they know it, they're in debt. All I've done is try to keep my store nice and clean."

Ironically, old-timers like Bassett say they would never go into the beauty business today. Inflation, high rents, and a seemingly endless supply of scissor-wielding competitors dim the chances of launching a successful shop. Dependent as they are on long-standing customers, the old-time Noe Valley beauty shops couldn't revamp their image even if they wanted to. They are a throwback to another, more leisurely era when a weekly shampoo and set, and maybe a manicure too, was a common ritual for many women. Like many other small specialty businesses, the neighborhood beauty shop seems to be in its twilight years.

EVICITION DEFENSE

Jonathan R. McCurdy, Attorney at Law

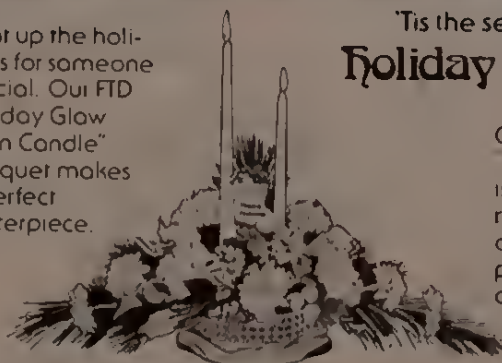
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Panning for a Thousand Pieces of Gold

How Roxey McCunn Enlivened a Frontier Legend

By Melinda Breitmeyer

Charlie's voice softened. "I could understand why you didn't want children when you were Hong King's slave. But if we marry, it'll be different."

Polly stared musing out of the window. "I know what people call men with Indian wives. Squaw men. They do not live in town and not with the Indians. They belong nowhere. Their children too. Strangers to their father's people and their mother's."

"You're not Indian, Pol."

"It's the same."

Such may have been the words of Polly Nathoy and Charlie Bemis, a Chinese woman and Caucasian man living in a rugged mining town in the Idaho mountains of 1890. Polly had arrived there 20 years before as the slave of a Chinese saloonkeeper. Charlie had won Polly's freedom in a poker game, and she later returned the favor by saving his life. The two lived together for many years before Polly finally consented to marry Charlie.

Their story has been unearthed by Ruthanne Lum McCunn and brought to life in her new book, *Thousand Pieces of Gold*, a biographical novel. It tells the true tale of a Chinese woman who after surviving a childhood of hardship in feudal China, was sold as a slave to rampaging bandits and then resold across the ocean to a new set of hardships in the Idaho gold fields.

Polly ultimately triumphed and became a frontier legend in a land where even if equal opportunity was not a reality, individuals of strength and will could still find room to carve out their own destiny.

"I was able to get under her skin and do it from her point of view, because of my upbringing," McCunn said in a recent interview. In the sunny front room of the Noe Valley Victorian she shares with her husband Don, the only clues to her upbringing were the gracefully carved tables and chairs her Chinese mother had sent from Hong Kong. Ruthanne McCunn ("Roxey" to her friends) grew up in Hong Kong with her mother's extended family, but she inherited the features of her Caucasian father.

One of her earliest memories is of her father returning home from a long stint with the Merchant Marines. "I wouldn't even acknowledge him as my father. I said, 'How can he be my father? He's a white man!'—obviously never looking in the mirror at myself."

In writing the novel, McCunn concluded that Polly decided not to have children because "she was caught be-

tween two worlds." Yet McCunn feels her own biracial background has enriched her life. "However, it's because of the times in which I live, and also, living in San Francisco, it's easy to be anything," she said with a laugh.

Breaking pots, smashing crockery, and upsetting baskets, the bandit strode across the trail of manure to the back of the stove where Lahu hid.

Rough hands yanked her out and threw her down.

Her father bent to help her. "That's my daughter."

The bandit kicked her father across the room. "I know," he leered, jerking Lahu off the floor.

Lahu's father sank to his knees. "Please, I beg you. Let her go."

"Don't worry, I'll pay you for this little fox."

He threw a bag in front of Lahu's father. It burst, scattering soybeans.

Lahu stared at her father, willing him not to pick them up. He reached out, hesitated, then looked up at Lahu, his eyes pleading for understanding. She twisted her face away, a sob strangling in her throat. Behind her, she heard him snatch the bag and scoop up the spilled seed.

Lahu (Polly's Chinese name) grew up the daughter of a poor farmer in northern China when peasants were struggling under the heavy yoke of feudalism, often worsened by natural adversity. "Drought, floods, locusts—it was always one disaster after another," McCunn said. If a peasant couldn't pay the heavy taxes, he was sent to prison, and his family would starve. Selling a daughter into slavery was often a last desperate resort.

McCunn's own great-grandmother was sold into slavery under different conditions in northern China. The young daughter of a wealthy family, she was sold to the Chinese court by a servant while both were escaping the turmoil of the Taiping Rebellion. The servant had become impatient with the child because her tiny bound feet slowed their getaway. At court, she became a favorite with the empress, who helped her escape during another upheaval years later. She managed to get an education, and worked as a translator. She married, was widowed and became blind in her early 30s, yet was able to move her four children to Hong Kong where they could get a good education.

McCunn, like Polly and most young Chinese girls, was called *qianjin*, or "thousand pieces of gold," by her parents during her childhood. She chose the

Continued on Page 7



Polly Nathoy on her wedding day, Aug. 13, 1894: "Underneath her dark dress, where no one except Charlie and herself would see, she had been afire in scarlet, from her long crimson petticoats to her embroidered corset cover and ruffled drawers."—*Thousand Pieces of Gold* by Ruthanne Lum McCunn.



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McCunn

Continued from Page 6

title for her book to point up its irony: a girl is told she is worth a fortune, then sold for a bag of beans.

"It seemed like such an irony as I was growing up that girls had this very endearing term, and yet I wasn't very old before I realized that women were definitely second-class citizens," she said.

Nine days' travel through thickly wooded trails brought them to a strange town. From the makeshift buildings and tents came music, raucous laughter, bursts of gunfire, and breaking glass.

"Those are saloons," Jim said. "Like your master's. There are 1,600 men in Warrens, 1,200 Chinese, 400 or so whites. And there are eleven women. Three are wives, two are widows, and a half dozen are hurdy gurdy girls. But they're all white. You'll be the only Chinese woman, an attraction that will bring men from miles around."

Polly Nathoy's uniqueness launched the legend, but her fame grew from her personal spirit and determination. The photos of Polly in McCunn's book reflect her buoyant nature.

McCunn was "immediately captivated" when she came across Polly's story while doing research for her first book, a history of the Chinese in America. That first glimpse of pictures and mementos in a small Idaho museum led to months of research on Polly's life and times.

McCunn interviewed people, now very elderly, who had known Polly and heard stories about her that had been handed down through three generations. "I was really lucky because the people

were so keen on having Polly's story told," McCunn said modestly of her research. She said that many of those she interviewed were such great talespinners that some of the dialogue was lifted right out of their stories.

McCunn also did a lot of deducing and piecing together of puzzling facts. "It was something I would think about all the time, when I was driving somewhere, when I was messing around the house or whatever, then suddenly something would click and it would come to me.

"When I first started writing the book, I thought this is going to be real easy because the outline is all there, so you just follow it. Then I realized actually it was a lot harder than making up a story from scratch, because when you have the facts, you can't deviate from them."

A pivotal fact in the story was reported in the frontier newspapers at the time: Charlie was shot by a drunken goldminer he had beaten in a poker game. When a doctor was unable to extract the bullet, everyone expected Charlie to die of blood poisoning. But Polly refused to give up.

The razor sank into Charlie's neck, letting loose a gush of red black blood. Polly dug deeper. The tip touched something hard. Bullet or bone? She withdrew the razor and forced a finger into the hole she had made, trying to ignore the blood spurting over everything. She felt sweat beading her forehead. A wave of faintness washed over her.

She forced her finger deeper. It hit something solid. Something small and smooth. She crooked her finger around the object but could not move it. She would have to use the razor to dislodge it.

The beauties and satisfactions of pastoral life, however, are also featured prominently in *Thousand Pieces of Gold*. McCunn has brought to vivid life the sights, sounds and smells of the magnificent Salmon River country where Polly lived. She did so after immersing herself in the area, staying at the former home of Polly's next-door neighbor, now a guest ranch, but still reachable only by boat or horseback.

Thousand Pieces of Gold is the fourth book Roxey and Don McCunn have written and published themselves in an expanding book business, Design Enterprises of San Francisco. For their latest book, they performed every step themselves, from typesetting to distributing.

The business seems like a natural extension of their mutually supportive 16-year marriage. They took turns putting each other through graduate school and deciding where they would live.

They are both staunchly independent about working, which in the past has led to disagreement with employers. "We both have a penchant for walking out on jobs," Roxey said. Three years ago she quit her teaching job at Galileo High School "in a melodramatic huff." But she wasted no time in turning to something new. "The next day there happened to be a small press book fair, and I went with Don and loved it." She decided to self-publish her *Illustrated History of the Chinese in America*, as Don had been urging her to do.

He had already published a book of his own, about a system of clothing design he developed after quitting a job as a New York theater director.

Selling their first two books via the mail-order system they had set up proved time-consuming, so the McCunns bought a home computer to handle mailing lists, labels and billing. With no

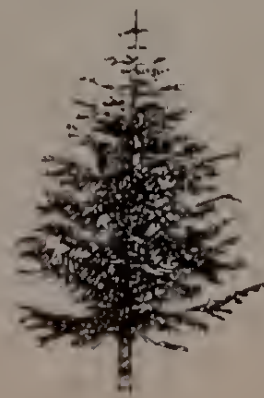
programming experience, Don set up the computer to run the business in just two weeks. Having found it difficult to glean instructions from the available books on the subject, Don wrote as his next book a practical guide for home-computer users: *Computer Programming for the Complete Idiot*.

He is now working on a book that will demonstrate the many applications of home computers.

The McCunns' most recent addition to their growing arsenal of equipment is a second-hand typesetting machine, on which they can set their books and promotional material. *Thousand Pieces of Gold* is already into its second printing in its first month of publication—and Roxey credits their machine operation.

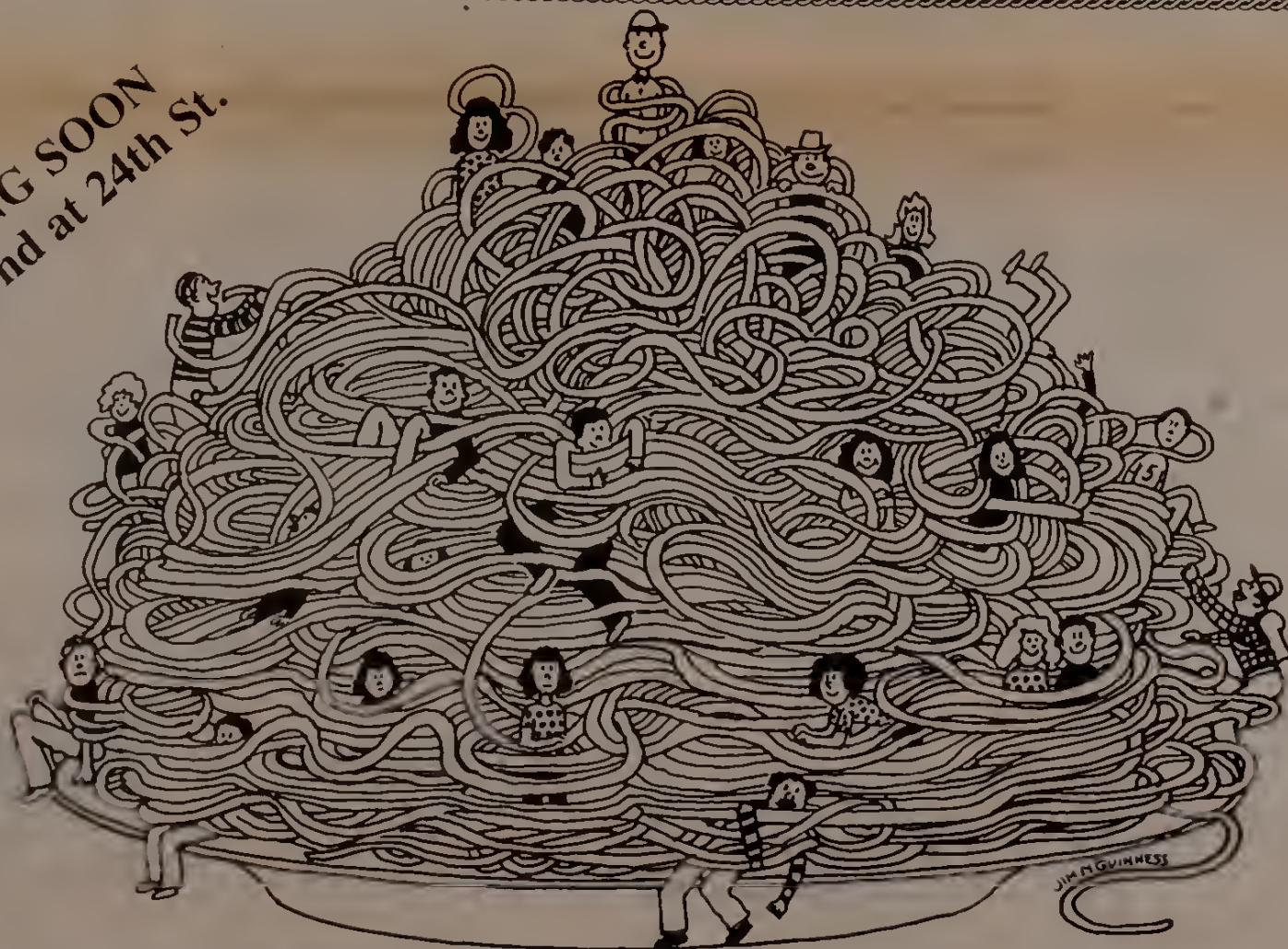
"It saves an incredible amount of time. We couldn't be doing what we're doing if we had to do it all manually. And it's not as expensive an investment as people think. Everything we've done we've gone the real cheap-o route, and then become more sophisticated as time and money allow."

In light of the increasing reluctance of New York publishers to take on new authors, perhaps the McCunns' next book should be another guide: *Self-Publishing for the Complete Idiot*. ■



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The last of the Thanksgiving Day leftovers have been gobbled up and we all feel as stuffed as the turkeys we've devoured. Now downtown Noe Valley braces for Christmas as 24th Street merchants promise to break with their sleepy-holiday tradition.

Star Greeting Cards proprietor Elsie Young says Noe Valley's Christmas season has been "dead" for as long as she can remember. She's been on 24th Street for 29 years. And Joy McLeod of Carno Liquors has been waiting since her arrival in 1966 for the festivities to begin.

This year should bring glad tidings, says the Noe Valley Merchants Association, which has formed its own Christmas Committee to get the snowball rolling.

Committee chair Jim DeAngelis, of Sweet Dreams, and Tom "Color" Crane, who is the association's newly elected president, promise lots of festive entertainment. Musicians, carolers, mimes, jugglers and Santa Claus himself will converge on 24th Street in the weeks before Christmas. Association members plan to deck the streets with decorations. They've purchased three cases of lights to help store owners illuminate shop windows.

The Business and Professional Association of Noe Valley will again hold a contest for the best dressed shop window in the neighborhood. The winner, to be chosen at the group's annual Christmas social, will receive a \$25 gift certificate and a certificate of recognition.

Friends of Noe Valley has no specific plans for Christmas, but will have a post-holiday soiree in early January.

Individual merchants have much in store for us as well. Accent on Flowers has recreated its famed window display. Star Magic will bring the Snow Queen and Fairy Godmother to the store to give three wishes to those who have been good all year.

Colorcrane is sponsoring a contest to see who can make the best ornaments, and entries will be displayed in the store. All ornaments will be judged for creativity and originality by a panel of local artists, and the winners in each age group (10 years and under, 11 to 18, and 19 and over) will win \$50 Colorcrane gift cer-

and now for the...

RUMORS

behind the news



Photo by Letta Fien

Barth Lilly designed this Christmas interior and window display at Accent on Flowers (24th Street near Castro). The shop has been transformed into an environment of old-fashioned holiday splendor.

tificates. Two runners-up will get \$10 certificates.

Cathexis will sell toys for less than a dollar, and A Different Point of View offers the latest in motorized vehicles for kids at just \$950 plus freight and tax.

But, what do the kids of Noe Valley want to happen on 24th Street this Christmas?

To find the answer to this burning question, the Noe Valley Bureau of Investigation visited Evelyn Forrester's fifth-grade class at Alvarado and Terry Hanley's seventh-grade class at St. Philip's. Snow on 24th Street was the most frequent response, but the kids had

other ideas, too.

At Alvarado, Nicole (age 10) gave her order of priority: "Snow, a 24th Street Christmas fair, lots of discounts, and happy people." Moriah wants "a sleigh on wheels with a Santa in it with reindeer" (fake, of course), coming down 24th Street. Amsha, also 10, insists there should be "lots of lights and decorations and glitter and just a lot of shiny stuff." Rebekah, another 10-year-old, wants to put one giant Christmas tree in the middle of 24th Street and have the road cleared of all vehicles. Les, age 10, wants "a Christmas tree on every corner."

Over at St. Philip's, Lance, age 12, would like to see Santa come down 24th Street Christmas Eve, and suggests that "they block off the street from Diamond to Dolores, then make fake snow all over the place with a plane." Another seventh grader, Dominic, would "like to see a Santa Claus on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle." Monica, also 12, wants to "see all the prices of candy lowered" at

local stores. She also would like to have "all the bars shut down on 24th Street" for Christmas.

The students at both schools will have a caroling parade down 24th Street just before Christmas Eve. We've also learned that Noe Valley Girl Scout Troop No. 1176 will be caroling and decorating a ward at Laguna Honda Hospital. And, of course, they'll again be selling their famous cookies in front of Bell Market and Gibraltar Savings starting Jan. 5.

Twenty-fourth Street postman Lonnie Watkins predicts the biggest mail crunch in history and warns that our mailboxes will likely be stuffed with a lot of junk mail. So what else is new? There were 20 lucky winners in the Business and Professional Association's turkey lottery. The drawing was held Nov. 20 for turkeys donated by our two supermarkets, Surf and Bell. Local anti-graffiti activist Fred "who else" Methner is now on the speakers bureau of Mayor Feinstein's Graffiti Removal Task Force, organized in September. The mayor's spokesman, George White, tells us Fred will speak to neighborhood groups around the city to create public awareness and hopefully generate neighborhood action plans. Good luck!...The Festival of Goblins, Noe Valley's Halloween celebration at the Ministry, is reported to have been a stark-raving success with more than 200 kids in attendance and a Big Band bash. The biggest treat for organizers was that it broke even financially.

Some of you might not know that Noe Valley is fast becoming a haven for expatriated Philadelphians, whose motto is "All things considered, I'd rather be in Noe Valley." Last month Helga D'Arcy opened a second location for her Original South Philly Cheesesteak Company in the old Noe Valley Tacos shop. Helga tells us that many of her regular customers at her North Beach store were Noe Valleyons hailing from Philadelphia. They begged her to bring her cheesesteaks across town and save them the trip.

This popular Philly sandwich is made by stuffing top round steak, fried onions and melted cheese in an Italian roll. Helga also imports the Philly Phavorite Tastykakes, a pastry dessert. She wants to thank all of those who've come in with the best wishes, and foregone diets.

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Hospice Hospitality

Hospice of San Francisco, an agency that provides medical care in the home for terminally ill patients and their families, has moved its office to Noe Valley. Hospice's home care program now will be operated from 225 30th St., which is also the home of S. F. Home Health Service, another health care provider.

Hospice employs a new concept of humane, palliative care for patients for whom there is no hope of cure. The idea was imported to this country from St. Christopher's Hospice in London, England. Hospice makes it possible for patients to die in the comfort of their homes, often largely pain-free. Hospice also addresses the emotional, social and psychological problems that can accompany a terminal illness.

For more information or to request the services of Hospice of San Francisco, phone 648-0965.

Holiday Music

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without some seasonal music. Noe Valley Music will present Gwen and Tom Hunter singing folk songs and telling stories along with old-time musician Randy Wilson at the Noe Valley Ministry on Sunday, Dec. 13, 2 p.m. Admission for this Children's Christmas Special is by donation of \$4 for grown-up kids, but only \$1 for real kids.

On Saturday, Dec. 19, 8:15 p.m., Larry Kassin will present Christmas Jazz, a holiday jam session by jazz artists who have been performing at the Ministry this past year. Among those invited are Idris Ackamoor, Mel Martin and Bishop Norman Williams. "New age" musician Steven Halpern plans to sit in

SHORT TAKES

on guitar. Admission is \$4.

Both Noe Valley Ministry and Bethany Methodist Church offer a chance to join in some rousing carol singing. Bethany's annual Christmas potluck, tree-trimming and caroling will take place Saturday, Dec. 12, 6 p.m. Noe Valley Ministry's neighborhood caroling will begin at the Ministry on Tuesday, Dec. 22, at 7:30 p.m.

Seasonal Services

The fuss and clamor of the December holidays occasionally obscure the religious celebrations which started all the seasonal cheer. The Noe Valley Ministry and Bethany Methodist Church offer a chance to share both Christian and Jewish observances throughout December.

On Sunday, Dec. 10, at 7:30 p.m., Judaic scholar Barry Ring and Rev. Carl Smith of the Ministry will conduct a workshop exploring the common themes of and profound differences between Chanukah and Christmas. On Sunday, Dec. 20, 7 p.m., Ring will lead a Chanukah service. Both events take place at the Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St.

Christian celebrations began Nov. 29 with the first Sunday in Advent and will continue every Sunday until Christmas. Noe Valley Ministry services take place at 10 a.m., and Bethany services at 11 a.m. at 1268 Sanchez St.

Special Advent celebrations include "Sharing with One Another" at 10 a.m. on Dec. 13 at the Ministry, with the Ishvani Dance Theater presenting a

dance/drama based on Gandhi's philosophy of *satyagraha*, and a pre-Christmas service at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 20, at Bethany.

A Christmas candlelight service begins at 7 p.m. Dec. 24, and communion takes place Friday, Dec. 25, at 10 a.m., both at the Ministry. For information about Bethany Christmas services, please call the parish office at 647-8393.

Volleyball, Anyone?

Friends of Noe Valley is working with the city Recreation and Parks Department to initiate "Sunday Morning Pick-up Volleyball" at Noe Courts, 24th and Douglass Streets.

Assistant Recreation Supervisor Velma Franklin has indicated that if enough neighbors want to play, the city will come up with equipment for use on the grass court near the Elizabeth Street entrance to the park.

Friends President Miriam Blaustein has offered to babysit for a limited number of small children while the parents play.

Although no regular teams are planned, a number of neighbors are eager to get started early in December. Players of all skill levels are welcome, and those wishing to join in should call John Knox at 282-1071 for information about the starting date and time.

Freeze the Nukes

Remember bomb shelters? Air raid drills in the public schools? Stocking

supplies in preparation for Armageddon? Are you ready for that again?

If you want to find out what nuclear war is really all about, you are invited to attend a showing of *The Last Epidemic: The Medical Consequences of Nuclear War* at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m.

Ian Thierman of the Resource Center for Non-Violence will talk to the audience before and after the film about the activities sponsored by the center in cooperation with the Nuclear Freeze Campaign and the Women's Party for Survival.

The film discusses in detail the medical effects of a so-called "limited" nuclear engagement. The Nuclear Freeze Campaign will have petitions for a statewide anti-nuke initiative available for signatures. If you want more information about anti-nuclear projects, call Gayatri Aron at 285-4832.

A Job on the Boards

If you'd like to start 1982 with a new job, put down the mistletoe and dust off your resume—the Community Boards Program has an opportunity for you. And you'd better get busy. The deadline for applications is Friday, Dec. 11, at noon.

The position is as area coordinator for the program's Noe-Eureka Valley branch, and you'll be working more than fulltime for this neighborhood-based "dispute resolution forum" which trains neighbors to assist each other in resolving conflicts.

The CBP folk ask that applicants have at least three years' direct experience in such things as program administration, evaluation and planning.

Resumes should be submitted to Nora Noguez, Central Office Coordinator for the Community Board Program, 149 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103. The phone number is 552-1250.

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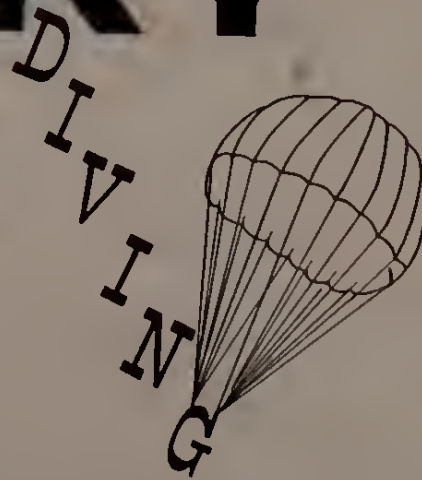
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Across the Boards

From Roof-Hopping to Hand-Shaking

By Molly Hooper

Editor's Note: The Community Boards Program provides a forum for arbitration of neighborhood disputes. The Noe Valley office is located at 1021 Sanchez St.; phone: 821-2470. While the following account is actual, the names are fictitious.

Neighbors Marina Mason and Jane Roberts were understandably alarmed when they caught the two young boys playing on their rooftops. They warned them they were trespassing.

Confronted by the two women, the boys seemed quite surly. At first they refused to give their names and then almost nonchalantly declared they'd been on practically every roof in the neighborhood without incident.

For the two women the encounter marked the beginning of what they feared would be a series of harassments.

About a week later Mason found a broken bottle on her rear deck and some red liquid splattered against the side of her house. Because the deck is almost inaccessible except from the house, she suspected that the bottle must have been thrown from the roof.

Tracking down where the two boys lived, Mason confronted their mother and accused her sons of trespassing and throwing the bottle. The boys heatedly denied they'd thrown any bottle, and their mother, Marsha Epps, thought she'd heard the last of the incident.

So it came as a shock when a caseworker from Community Boards showed up at her house almost a year later to ask that she and her sons appear at a neighborhood hearing to discuss a series of complaints raised by Mason and Roberts.

Epps, dumfounded, said she was unaware of any criticism against her boys with the exception of the year-old roof-hopping incident. Still, eager to clear the air, she agreed to attend.

The Community Boards panel of five neighborhood volunteers met recently, bringing together Marina Mason, her husband Boh, Jane Roberts, Marsha Epps and her two sons Rick, 12, and Todd, 14.

Under the panel's direction the Ma-

sons and Roberts had the first opportunity to speak their piece. They said that during the past year they had witnessed the boys breaking glass in the street as well as playing with matches near their homes. While they had not actually seen the boys do it, they suspected them of throwing eggs at one of their houses as well as slashing the tires of the Masons' car.

For their part, the boys denied throwing eggs or slashing tires. They explained that they had felt free to play on other people's roofs because before moving to San Francisco they had lived in a small Connecticut town where people were used to children crisscrossing hackyards.

Visibly shaken by the barrage of criticism leveled against her sons, Epps questioned why the two families hadn't communicated their concerns to her directly.

In San Francisco it is difficult to be a single parent, Epps, a divorcee, said. She noted that in Connecticut her neighbors had served almost like an extended family, taking an interest in neighborhood kids and looking out for them. In contrast, it seemed that Noe Valley acknowledged her children only when they did something wrong.

As Epps revealed her feelings, there was a visible drop in tension. The others began to understand her sense of helplessness as a parent in the face of poor neighborhood communication.

As part of an informal written resolution concluding the hearing, the three households exchanged phone numbers and agreed to try to keep their new lines of communication open. In addition, the boys promised to respect private property and to go out of their way to get to know the Roberts and Masons, who reciprocated the promise.

For Community Boards caseworker Steve Ericson, who helped bring the parties together, there is a moral to this case:

"A certain density of population can create a certain alienation. Neighborhoods that are pleasant to live in have to be created. They just can't exist on their own. You can't sit there passively and expect it to come about."

MORE Mouths to Feed



Editor's Note: The following is a do-it-yourself "More Mouths" item. We couldn't think of better words than those we received from proud Noe Valley parents Bob and Cathi Mendle:

Dear Voice,

We think the Voice is the best paper in town. Have had intentions of sending a pic of our "new arrival" for some time. Now she's a 7-month-old arrival—hope this still counts. She arrived on Passover and Easter. Her name (Simcha) means

joyous occasion in Hebrew. Her favorite thing is pulling our cat's tail.

The Noe Valley Voice is bullish on babies and a bit susceptible to flattery, so don't hesitate. Immediately after writing your first check to the diaper service, write a note to us at 1021 Sanchez St., S.F., 94114. There's no charge, and like the parents of young Simcha Mendle, you'll be sharing your joy with your neighbors.

Merry Christmas!

Plate's

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The Fairviews of the Valley

Letters 1850-1910

By Elaine Molinari

San Francisco, the New World's Promised Land, sprang to life with the discovery of gold, but continued to thrive on the cunning, ingenuity and guts of its inhabitants. Here, and in ensuing issues, we follow the fictitious Fairview family as they sink their roots into the factual history of Noe Valley.

Dear Cousin Ahigail,

As I promised when we parted company in the lush and fertile Mohawk Valley of New York, I shall attempt to log our adventures to keep you apprised of our situation as we move West.

When we arrived at the train station in New York City, amidst the confusion of de-boarding and gathering our haggage, Chad was sent to locate Uncle Whitmore whose train from Boston was to have arrived several hours earlier. Chad ran off across the station calling in all directions for Uncle, dancing and dodging through the crowd, until he tripped and sprawled on the floor in the very centre of a group of men trading "Gold Stories." He was quite chagrined to have acted like such a child before Uncle Whitmore, Captain Atwater and various other passengers of the *High Seas*, the harque Uncle has engaged to take us West. After hiring carriages to carry us all to our hotel, Papa, Charles, Lance, Uncle Patrick and Uncle Whitmore went with the Captain to have a look at the ship, and to review preparations for departure.

Captain Atwater, a short, squat, rather square man, is extremely loquacious, having entertained us with harrowing stories of the sea for most of that evening, all the while smoking and stalking the most dreadful smelling cigar. He weaves as he's talking, rocking from heel to toe as if trying to steady himself from the thrusts of a ship at sea. From all he said we learned that, indeed, we would be traveling South and North more often than West, and with fair seas we could expect to reach San Francisco by mid-July.

The next morning we sailed out the river and away from New York, each with jumbled feelings of anticipation and apprehension, each disguising his dreams as insulation against the unknown.

Our quarters aboard are cramped but more comfortable than I had expected, serving as sick bay for the first several days at sea. Kate cared for us all, buoying our spirits and calming our fears. One morning, knowing the seas had shaken out every bit of food I'd ever eaten and surely none was left, I ventured out with Lance and Chad to investigate the ship. The brisk salt air was exhilarating and rekindled our excitement for the journey. While searching to find the stern hold where, we'd been told, the livestock were carried, we happened upon six of the crew gambling. Ahhy, with gold pieces! Uncle Patrick, who is in his cups by noon these days, was reeling cross the deck (as Lance said, "More from the sips than the seas"), expounding on the exceedingly bad taste of "the sardines in this bathtub who won't accept paper money," claiming instead that gold is the only tender they will exchange. What they are really saying, Ahhy, is "Gold is raw, and needs no hacking."

At dinner that evening we met a most charming and fierce man making a return voyage to San Francisco. He is Mr. Jack Squire, "Entrepreneur and Investment Agent," as he immodestly prints on his calling cards. Lucinda claims he is "a rogue and brassy as one might expect of Western men," although how she might come to know that escapes me.

Mr. Squire is a business associate of Uncle Whitmore and is responsible for the cargo of tools, building supplies and yard goods stowed below. What stories he tells of the gold fields. And what enthusiasm he has stirred in Papa and Charles (and us all) with his lively portrayals of a city writhing and stretching to accommodate its increasing numbers. As Mr. Square stated, in explaining the present boom, the population grew from 400 souls in 1847 to 25,000 in 1850, the majority being men, most well-educated, many claiming aristocratic and even royal birthrights, but all finding the undeveloped crudeness of San Francisco to be a great equalizer of mankind. Papa and Uncle Whitmore were delighted with this knowledge, shouting that business would thrive with so much room for ingenuity. It was about then we ended the evening, because of a "shocking display of pomposity" (as Charles so callously put it) on Lucinda's part. She had been crying that she could not "flourish in a place that's been a part of this country for a mere five years, with no history, no structure, no class-system." It was then Lance suggested that, in a city with so many opportunities, Lucinda might capitalize on her abilities and establish "Lucinda's Finishing School of San Francisco: Placer Mining with Propriety," and so Papa, having heard enough, sent us all off to bed.

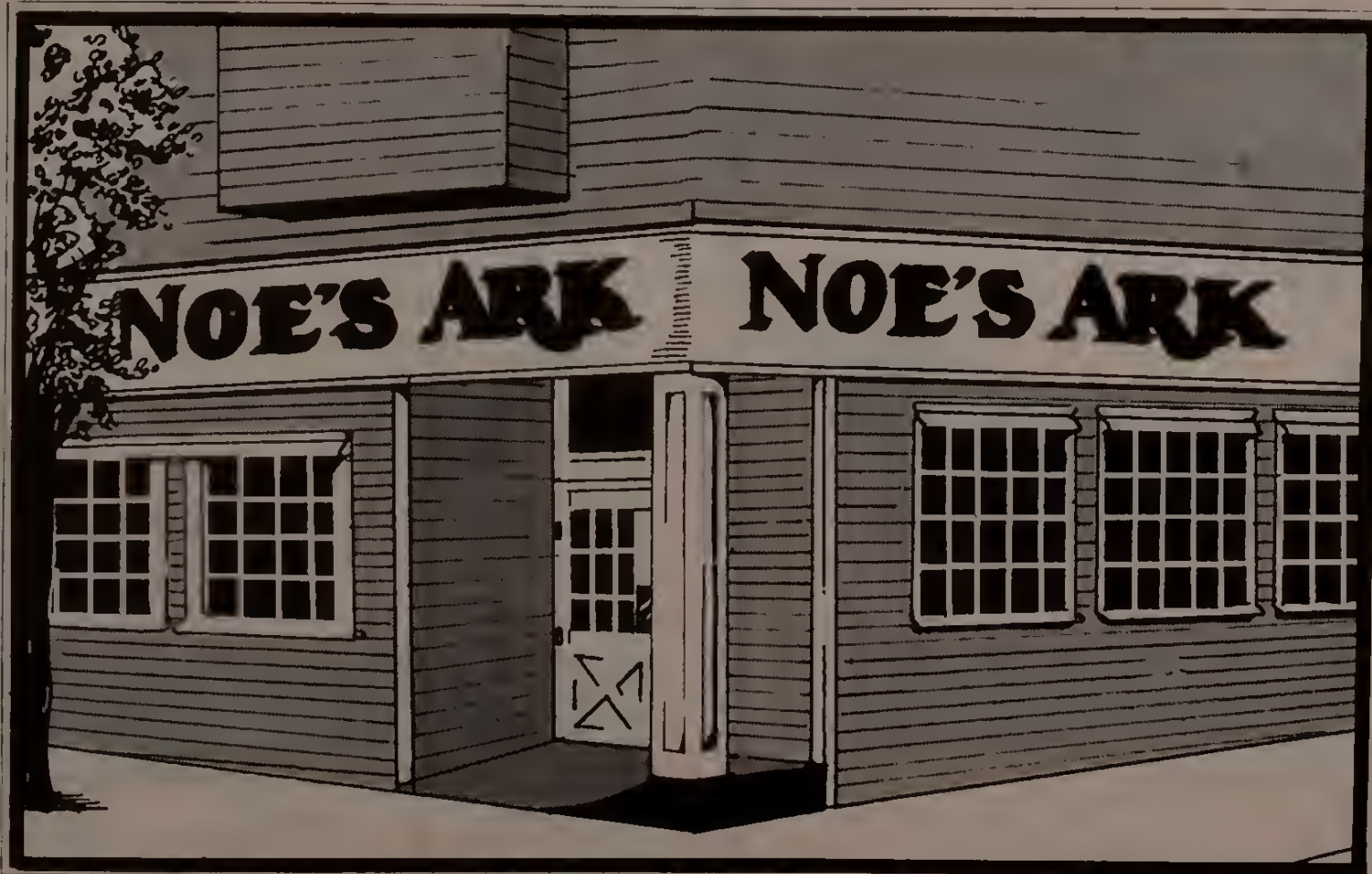
I send my love and regards to you and your family and pray fate will allow us to meet again soon.

India Fairview

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Alternative Christmas Gifts

By Mary O'Brien

Need a few tips for gifts for people who either have everything or have nothing and don't want just anything? Don't despair. Here are some alternative gift suggestions.

- Wine-mulling Packets: You can make these yourself with some ground cinnamon, cloves and other spices wrapped in gingham. Excellent for the "holiday spirits."
- Subscription to a Publication: May we suggest the *Noe Valley Voice*.
- Membership in a Club or Organization: Friends of Noe Valley, Sierra Club, American Youth Hostels, Nuclear Freeze Campaign, etc.
- Firewood: A warm hearth is a great comfort.
- Printed Address Labels/Stationery: Design a personal logo for a friend.
- Babysitting: If you have a friend who needs to get out without the kids, an offer to babysit for a night or weekend would be well received.
- The Promise of a Home-Cooked Dinner.
- Gift Certificates: These are always used and appreciated. A couple of ideas you might consider: cooking lessons, music lessons, dance classes, tickets to a concert or play, a house cleaning, a massage or hot tub visit, lunch or dinner at someone's favorite eatery.
- A Living Tree: Friends of Noe Valley is issuing \$50 certificates saying that a tree will be planted in the neighborhood in the name of whomever you designate. Check this out by calling Molly Hooper at 648-3557.



Books for Kids

Here's a sampling of new children's books at the Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. The library is open Tuesday through Saturday, with preschool story hours on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. and a story hour for older children on Thursdays at 4 p.m.

New Picture Stories

One More Thing, Dad by Susan Thompson
I'm Taggerty Too by Peter Pavey
Pig Pig Grows Up by David McPhail
Boom de-Boom by Elaine Edelman
Tyler Too and the Thunder by Robert Crowe
Fiddle-I-Fe by Diane Stanley

New Fiction

Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the U.F.O. by David A. Adler
Mishmash and the Robot by Molly Cone
The Person in the Potting Shed by Barbara Corcoran
Susannah and the Blue House Mystery by Patricia Elmore
Like Everybody Else by Barbara Grian
There's a Caterpillar in my Lemonade by Diana Gregory
The Case of the Bashful Bank Robber by E. W. Hildick
The Fledgling by Jane Langton
Class Pictures by Marilyn Sachs
C.O.L.A.R. by Alfred Slato
Last Was Lloyd by Doris Buchanan Smith
Mice on Ice by Jane Yolen

Photo by Leila Fiery



Such endangered species as librarians and new books can still be found at the Noe Valley Library, which offers an especially well-stocked children's reading room.

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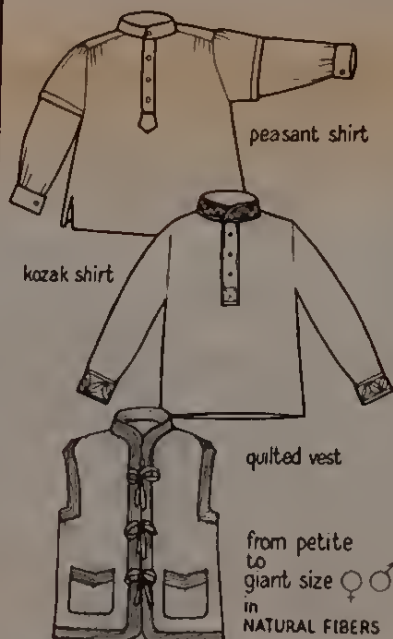
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By Lynn Rogers

Review

A Literary Potpourri for Under the Tree

*Crush*By Jane Fitcher
Little Brown & Co.
1981, 255 pages, \$8.95

At last I've read a good book on a serious subject for a young adult that wasn't written by Judy Blume! In fact, I read the whole book thinking it was for me, an older adult, before I found out from the jacket that it was really meant for my 11-year-old-but-mature-for-her-age daughter. Jane Fitcher may be a first novelist, but she's obviously a solid writer if she can produce a story that's interesting to both of us.

Jean Jinx Tuckwell is a 16-year-old boarding school student who is "easily disturbed by things." As she says, "my worry mechanism goes into effect at the slightest provocation."

The most disturbing "thing" that happens to Jinx in her senior year is the crush she develops for Lexie Yves. Lexie is everything Jinx is not—beautiful, self-assured, worldly, exciting. She is also elitist, erratic, and extremely self-centered, but Jinx doesn't see these qualities until it's too late, until she's hooked on Lexie's charms.

For a little while, a few short months, Jinx feels more excited than she's ever felt just sitting next to Lexie, just reading her notes, just holding her hand. And Lexie seems to feel just as excited about Jinx. And yet—what's Lexie doing with her "cousin" Philip in his motel room, and why is she suddenly so friendly with Laura Carr? Jinx fails to see that Lexie should not be trusted with the strong emotions Jinx has for her, and in the end she is very nearly crushed by Lexie's betrayal.

Fitcher's narrative style and sense of detail are excellent. She is able to treat the complex tangle of sexual awakening in Jinx and Lexie with compassion and delicacy. *Crush* made me remember how terribly hard it was not to know, not to have experienced. I hope it makes it a little easier for my own daughter as she makes her own beginnings.

Marin: The Place, The People
Text by Jane Fitcher
Photography by Robert Conover
Holt, Rinehart & Winston
1981, 320 pages, \$24.95

Jane Fitcher had a busy year—two books by two big publishers! *Marin* will probably outsell *Crush*—it's always easier to find a market for a beautiful coffee table book than for a serious first novel, even if it costs nearly three times as much. And why not? Many of us have friends and relatives who have little time for reading but still like books. *Marin*, with its 200 beautiful color photos by Robert Conover, is the perfect picture book of the year.

Even Marin Countyites and their friends will like *Marin*. Fitcher and Conover went beyond the peacock-leather-wielding stereotypes and looked at the natural and working beauty of the place. They expressively present the fishermen at China Camp, the ranchers in Hicks Valley, the waterfowl in Bolinas Lagoon. Fitcher's research into the county's past pays off in the stories she tells of the "oldtimers," the links she makes between then, now, and the future.

It looks like "Marvelous Marin" really is. Too bad it costs so much to live there—or even look at it!

Killing Wonder: A Mystery Novel
By Dorothy Bryant
Ata Books, 1928 Stuart St., Berkeley,
CA 94703
1981, 178 pages, \$6 paper, \$10 cloth

"I was the only one there who was nobody, and everybody was there," said Jessie Posey of the first literary party she ever attended.

India Wonder, the great India Wonder, had been kind enough to invite the struggling young writer to her celebration of women's friendship and creativity, and there she was, shyly rubbing

shoulders with "practically every important woman writer in Northern California." It seemed that Jessie's dream of a "community of writers, a network, a sisterhood" was really coming true.

Poor Jessie. Only a few hours later, her dream turns into a nightmare. India Wonder, in the midst of her intimate friends, with her husband Rueben and her daughter Georgie at her side, suddenly collapses—and dies. At first the cause of death is thought to be heart failure, but the next morning the police inform Jessie of the awful truth. India had succumbed to a lethal dose of cyanide! Who could have done such an awful deed and why?

With the aid of the handsome and understanding young police inspector Jim Merino, Jessie sets out to discover the murderer of her idol. What she learns about India Wonder, the "community" of women writers, and the seamy inside world of writing and publishing disillusion her so greatly that she considers giving up writing altogether.

The unique quality of Dorothy Bryant's fiction has always been her ability to combine a good plot with a feminist message. Here she takes that remarkable skill one step, actually two steps further. In *Killing Wonder*, Bryant has written a really good mystery. Like Agatha Christie, she presents the reader with a wide array of characters, each seemingly totally innocent in the beginning, each seemingly totally guilty by the end.

Was the killer the old leftist Antonia, the white witch Celeste Wildpower, the ex-streetfighter Yolanda, the weepy poet Sylvia, the brilliant but unknown Jane Lee, the sexy Margot Stackpole, the spurned lover Carla, or the vengeful Pamela Righbottom? Or was it Reuben, the ignored husband who often went astray but always came back? Or maybe poor put-upon Georgie—named after George Sand but never allowed the time to develop her own talent? All had motive and opportunity, all seem capable of murder.

What's really nice about this book, though, is its quiet humor. Bryant is having fun here at no one's expense. The characters' names are vintage Christie—Pamela Righbottom, indeed!

Best of all, Bryant voices the whole book from a 20-year-old beginning writer's point of view without seeming cute or precious. Jessie is innocent, earnest and extremely likable.

Green Thoughts: A Writer in the Garden
By Eleanor Perenyi
Random House
1981, 289 pages, \$15.50

Eleanor Perenyi has done a rare thing—she's written a gardening book with guts. For example, here are some of her thoughts on weathermen. "The drought is serious, the corn crop threatened, lawns are burning up and water restrictions forbid us to water them. Turn to the evening weather forecast and there is a grinning young man surrounded by weather maps and radarscopes to assure us we haven't a worry in the world: 'the threat of shower activity has passed and it looks like a gorgeous weekend.' ... It is a frightening revelation of how insulated we have become from the natural world."

Green Thoughts is packed with good gardening tips such as how to make compost, what to put in a rock garden, and what tools to buy, but it's got a lot more going for it than that. It's full of marvelous quotes about nature and gardening from George Sand, Gertrude Stein, Jim Crockett and others.

It also has a listing of seed catalogs rated good, bad or awful. It also explores the history of gardening from Pliny to Perenyi, and even talks about the sexist aspects of gardening—how women started agriculture in the first place and how men turned it into a macho industry of monocrops and pesticides.

Perenyi claims to be an amateur, but 30 years of experience have taught her more than most professionals I've met. Though her garden's in Connecticut, we Californians can still learn from her. ■

Starting in January, 1982, Lynn Rogers will have a weekly gardening program on KALW, 91.7 FM, Wednesdays at 9:25 a.m. and 4:25 p.m.

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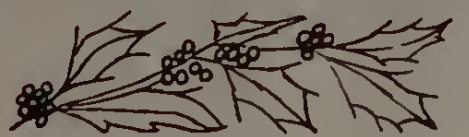
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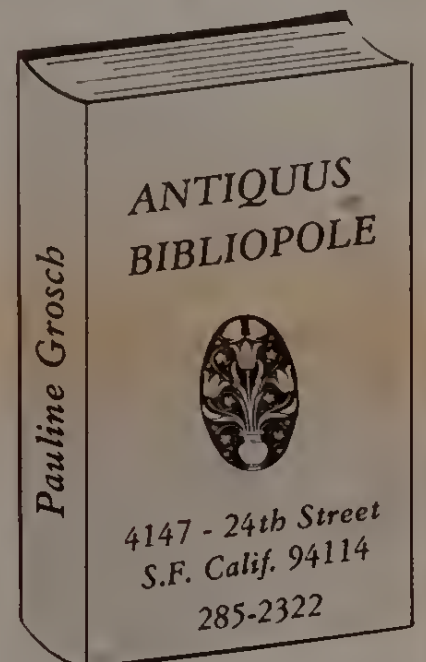
SPECIAL THANKS to RAK Mazook.

DEAR MARION, All's well here except that you're there. Come back and play in Noe Valley. Love, J&S.

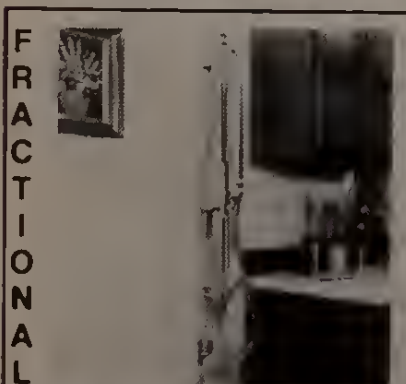
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Note: Our next issue will come out Feb. 1. The deadline will be Jan. 22.



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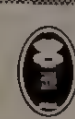


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CALENDAR

Dec. 1: Alberta Jackson and Touch perform with Casselberry & Dupree. Amelia's, 647 Valencia St. 9 p.m.

Dec. 2-10: "Venetian Coathangers" by Manuela Jemina. Acrylic paintings, pen & pink drawings. S. F. Women's Building, 3543 18th St. Wed.-Fri., 2-7 p.m.; Sat., 12-5 p.m.

Dec. 4-6: The Shamanic Journey and Healing, workshop led by Michael Harner. The California Institute of Integral Studies, 3494 21st St. Fri., 7-10 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 10-5 p.m. 648-1489

Dec. 5: Linda Lucero, author of *Compositions de Mi Cocina/Compositions from My Kitchen*. Food, art and fun. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. 3-5 p.m.

Dec. 5: Noe Valley Music presents Jean Handl and David Renton on harpsichord and lute. 1021 Sanchez St. 8-15 p.m.

Dec. 5: Seventh annual Fiesta de Navidad. Hispanic music, costumed dancing, food, pinata-breaking, and a Las Posadas procession. Fort Point Historic Site. 1-4 p.m.

Dec. 5: Noe Valley Archives meeting to plan history festival in February, 1982. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 1-3 p.m.

Dec. 5: Dance benefit for *Newsfront International* magazine. Featuring salsa band Tropical Nights. The Farm, 1499 Potrero Ave. 8 p.m.

Dec. 5: Rummage sale and baked goods. A fund-raising event for Noe Valley Co-op Nursery School. 1021 Sanchez St. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dec. 5, 6: Winter Women's Art & Crafts Fair '81. S. F. Women's Building, 3543 18th St. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Dec. 5, 6, 12, 13, 19: The Victoria Theatre and the Fingertip Theater present matinees of puppetry for children and adults. Victoria Theatre, 2961 16th St. 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Dec. 6: Dance and birthday celebration with Joe Caramango and his band. S. F. Home Health Service, 225 30th St. 1-3 p.m.

Dec. 6: Stanley Aronowitz, author of *False Promises*, will celebrate the publication of his newest book, *The Crises in Historical Materialism: Class Politics and Culture in Marxist Theory*. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. 7 p.m.

Dec. 6: Second Annual Stained Glass Show. Gallery Sanchez, 1021 Sanchez St. Reception for artists, 2-4 p.m.

Dec. 7: Variety Show by the Senior Matinee Theatre. S. F. Home Health Service, 225 30th St. 1 p.m.

Dec. 8: Open forum for the Latina community of the Bay Area. Bilingual event. S. F. Women's Building, 3543 18th St. 7 p.m.

Dec. 13: Modern Times Bookstore's 10th Anniversary Party. Champagne, cake and music by Swingshift, Casselberry and Dupree and Judy Grahn. Valencia Rose, 766 Valencia St. 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 13: Children's concert. Folk songs, stories and old-time music. Gwen and Tom Hunter with Randy Wilson. Noe Valley Music, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

Dec. 18: S. F. Community Chorus sings "Judas Maccabaeus" by Handel. Mission Dolores Basilica, 16th and Dolores. 8 p.m.

Dec. 18: Lester Cole discusses his new book *Hollywood Real*. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 18: Tree-trimming at the Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 3 p.m.

Dec. 19: Christmas Jazz. A hot jam session featuring seasonal tunes. Noe Valley Music, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

Dec. 20: Chanukah (after sundown Dec. 20 through Dec. 28).

Dec. 22: Christmas caroling. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Dec. 22: Christmas story-telling for kids. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 2:30 p.m.

Dec. 25: Christmas.

Dec. 29: Holiday films for kids. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. Preschoolers, 10:30 a.m.; older children, 4 p.m.

Jan. 9: Jazz meets funk. Hawley Currens and the Promotions. Noe Valley Music, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

Jan. 16: Jazz great Eddie Henderson in concert. Noe Valley Music, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

Jan. 23: Contact improv with flutist Larry Kasson and dancer Catherine Duncan. Noe Valley Music, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

Jan. 27: Operatic baritone Kenneth Lawry in concert. Noe Valley Music, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

Please send Calendar items before the 15th day of the month preceding month of issue to *The Noe Valley Voice*, 1021 Sanchez St., SF 94114.

NOE VALLEY CINEMA

Films are shown Fridays at 8 p.m. at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. near 23rd. Call 469-8890 for details.

- Dec. 4** Avant Garde/Punk/New Wave/Dada, including films of the Dead Kennedys, Sleepers, Mutants, Dils, Avengers, and UXA performing live at the Mabuhay (\$2.50 admission for this show).
- Dec. 11** Charlie Chaplin in *The Gold Rush* and (shorts) *A Night at the Show* and *Laughing Gas*.
- Dec. 18** Animation Madness from Tex Avery, the "King of Cartoon Krazies."

*December 18 will be the last show of the year. Noe Valley Cinema will return January 8 with Edgar G. Ulmer's *Ruthless*.

ONGOING EVENTS

Noe Valley Senior Center, 1021 Sanchez St., 282-2317

- Hot lunches Tues. and Thurs., 1 p.m.
- Exercise Tues. and Thurs., 12:30 p.m.
- Nutrition class, Thurs., 1:30 p.m.

Bethany/Methodist Church, 1268 Sanchez St., 647-8393

- Sundays: Adult Bible class, 9:30 p.m. Worship celebration, 11 a.m. Children's class, 11 a.m. Korean Baptist Church, 1:30 p.m.
- Monday through Thursday: Children's after-school art program, 1 p.m.
- Thursdays: Children observation class, 9 a.m. Improvisation class, 6 p.m. Choir, 7:30 p.m.
- Fridays and Saturdays: workshops, benefits, plays

Jamestown Community Center, 180 Fair Oaks St., 647-6274

- After-school program for youth in arts and crafts, animal care, tutoring, library, films, recreation for boys and girls, field trips, gymnastics, dances. Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- SOS: Employment and career guidance for youth. Babysitter service. Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 826-6880
- Dance/Exercises: Mon., Wed., 6-7 p.m.
- Los Mayores de Centro Latino senior services. 826-1647.
- Bingo, Thurs., 7-10 p.m.

S.F. Home Health Service, 225 30th St., 285-5615

- Hot lunches daily.
- English, Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m. to noon.
- Calligraphy, Mon. & Tues., 10 a.m. to noon
- Loteria/Bingo, Mon.-Fri., 1:30-3:30 p.m.
- Weaving, Mon.-Fri., 1-4 p.m.
- Sewing, Mon.-Fri., 1-3:30 p.m.
- Health Education, Thurs., 11 a.m. to noon.

S.F. Repertory, 4147 19th St., 864-3305

- Dec. 2-Jan. 3: "13 Rue de L'Amour" by Georges Feydeau. New adaptation by Mawhy Green and Ed Feilbert. Thurs.-Sun., 8 p.m.; Sun. matinee, 2 p.m.

Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St., 282-9246

- Dec. 4: Socialist School Forum. "Women, the Family and the Welfare State." 8 p.m.
- Dec. 14: Poetry reading by Lillian Robinson and Douglas Michael Massine. 7:30 p.m.

Vets Center, 1708 Waller St., 386-6726

- Vietnam-era veterans outreach program. Walk-in weekdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- One-on-one counseling, employment listings, rap groups, referrals.

Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St., 285-2788

- Noe Valley Community Archives meeting, first Sat. of month, 10 a.m.
- Preschool story hours, Tues., 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
- Story hour for older children, Thurs., 4 p.m.
- Community Garden workdays. Call for schedule.

Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., 282-2317

Daily:

- Word and meditation, 8 a.m.
- Tai chi exercise, 8:30 a.m.
- Noe Valley Co-op Nursery School. 821-9717
- Draft Registration and C.O. counseling. 282-2317.
- Dance movement therapy, by appointment. 864-0911 or 665-7598
- Community Boards Program. 821-2470
- Gallery Sanchez. 282-2317.

Sundays:

- Overeaters Anonymous, 9 a.m. 824-2914.
- Noe Valley Ministry worship, 10 a.m.

Mondays:

- DancYnergy, Mon., Wed., Fri., 12-1 p.m. Thurs., Sat., 10-11 a.m. 826-2416.
- Jazz Exercise, 6:15 p.m. 282-5835

Tuesdays:

- Yoga, Tues., Thurs., 7:30 p.m. 648-2371
- Noe Valley Seniors lunch, Tues., Thurs., 1 p.m.
- Children's Movement class, 3 p.m. 641-1415
- Noe Valley Girl Scouts, 4 p.m. 285-2648
- Escrima Philippine martial arts, 6:30 p.m. 756-6443.
- Singing from Inside Out, 7 p.m. 564-3184, 584-2435

Wednesdays:

- Prenatal exercise workshop, 10:30 a.m. 824-2324
- Noe Valley Ministry children's program, 3:30 p.m.
- Yoga, 6 p.m. 648-1050.
- Prayer gathering, 5:30 p.m.
- Harmonica for the Musical Idiot, 8 p.m.

Thursdays:

- Escrima, 7:30 p.m.
- Greek/Israeli folk dancing, 7:30 p.m. 647-2483.
- Jazz exercise, 6:15 p.m. 282-5835

Fridays:

- Noe Valley Cinema, 8 p.m. 469-8890.

Saturdays:

- Tai chi, 10 a.m. 386-7929
- Overeaters Anonymous, 3:30 p.m. 826-5685
- Noe Valley Music, 8:15 p.m.

Action for Better Living for the Elderly (ABLE), 944 Market St., 788-2253

- Weekly discussion on forming creative, extended family households. All ages, mature adults welcome.

Francis of Assisi Senior Center, 145 Guerrero St., 861-5790

- Hot lunches, Mon.-Fri., noon-6:50
- Legal assistance second Mon., 1-2 p.m.
- Crafts, Mon., 1 p.m.
- Bingo, Tues., 1 p.m.
- Mini-market, Wed., 12:30 p.m.
- Exercise class, Fri., 10 a.m.-noon

S.F. Women's Health Center, 14 Precita, 282-6999

- Women's health classes, workshops, referrals
- Mon., Wed., 10-3. Tues., 12-5. Thurs., 12-4:30. Fri., 10-noon.

Options for Women Over Forty, 3543 18th St., 431-6944

- Sunday brunch, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Job counseling by appointment. Mon., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Support group for women and alcohol. Tues., 5-6 p.m.
- Women Over 40 Experimental Theatre. Wed., 7 p.m.
- Dec. 12: Workshop on handling depression. 11 a.m.

S.F. Socialist School, 29 29th St., 221-3333

- Dec. 4: "Women, the Family and the Welfare State." At Modern Times Bookstore, 8 p.m.
- Dec. 11: Barbara Ehrenreich on "The New Anti-Feminism." At the Women's Building, 8 p.m.
- Dec. 18: "Internalized Oppression." 8 p.m.

Galeria de la Raza, 2851 24th St., 826-0009

- Through Dec. 5: Fashion Moda: 50 artists from S.F., N.Y., L.A., Oakland. Tues.-Sat., 1-6 p.m.

Nature Theatre of Oklahoma at the Cloud House/Talking Leaves Bookstore, 14th and Sanchez, 863-5864

- All performances begin at 8 p.m.
- Dec. 4: "Columbus Unhounded: Breath Epic." "The Framers." "The Death of Iphigenia."
- Dec. 11: "The Conquest of America." "The End Befallen Edgar Allen Poe, 1849."
- Dec. 18: "Oracle." "Christmas Poem." "The Photograph."

Bajone's, 1062 Valencia St., 282-2522

- Jazz/funk seven nights a week, 9 p.m.
- Sundays: Pianist Ed Kelly, 5 p.m. Bishop Norman Williams and guests, 9 p.m.
- Mondays: Martha Young Trio.
- Tuesdays: E. W. Wainwright's African Roots of Jazz
- Wednesdays: Salsa with Babatunde.
- Thursdays: Moment's Notice jazz.
- Fridays and Saturdays: Marvin Holmes and Oakland.